

Dragon Newsletter

September, 2006 Edition



Dragon families and friends,

After another month of missions in the skies over Baghdad and the heat of Taji, we move closer to returning. Despite that, the pace of events continues as fast as ever. Along with maintaining a rigorous mission cycle, we are already beginning preparations for departure as we pack up equipment, attend briefings, and deal with a mountain of "going-home" paperwork.

By the time we get home, we will have seen many changes take place in our formation. Bravo and Charlie Companies have already changed commanders, and by the time you read this newsletter, our HHC commander MAJ Byron Needum will have passed the guidon to CPT Matt Salvo. Yes, I said "Major" Byron Needum. He was promoted last month, but after the newsletter was published (that's my story and I'm sticking to it). Two of our senior warrant officers are also coming home newly promoted...on September 1st we promoted Carl Farrow to the rank of Chief Warrant Officer 5, the highest Warrant Officer rank possible. This is no small accomplishment; only 40 Warrant Officers in the entire Army were selected by the promotion board for that rank this year. This is a true testament to Carl's leadership and technical knowledge as an Aviator. Troy Snook was promoted as well, to Chief Warrant Officer 4. Troy's promotion is a well deserved after 16 years of military service and mentoring of junior pilots. CW5 Farrow's and CW4 Snook's leadership and knowledge will be key to the successful future of our Army.

September 11th, Camp Taji held a 5K memorial run in honor of all the victims and families of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Many of our Soldiers participated in this run,

showing not only our physical prowess but also our compassion and remembrance to the victims of that tragic event.

As we get closer to redeployment, our thoughts turn to life after our return home. We all have expectations on what it will be like. I'm sure that everyone (both the Soldiers here and the families at home) has changed over the past year, so it will take time for you and your loved one to get back into the swing of things. I ask that everyone be patient with one another and try not to take things too fast—the experts say that it's

important to talk with one another about your plans for the homecoming. I encourage you all to start this dialogue soon. Communication is key to a happy and successful reunion. All of you have done a wonderful job keeping the home fires burning and your Soldiers will adjust, it will just take a little flexibility and patience from both sides.

Our mission here continues and we'll stay in the fight until relieved by the 1st Cav. Thank you all for your love and support throughout this long and challenging deployment. We will see you soon.

LTC Michael J. Rapavi
Dragon 6



LTC Rapavi after another successful mission



Alpha Company "Vipers"

Greetings to all the family and friends of the Vipers!

Well, the light is there at the end of that long dark tunnel. Everyone in the company can see it. It still seems a little far away, but at least it is there and we can see it. Everyday when you go to the Dining Facility you see more and more 1st Cav patches on Soldiers' shoulders and it reminds you that our time here at Camp Taji is winding down. Some people have even begun to pack up their room. 1SG Odonnell is heading up the operation to figure out how we are going to get everything we brought over and then some packed neatly into the containers—no easy task, believe me! That coupled with the fact that it is finally starting to cool off a little, makes getting up each day a little easier. And when I say cool off I mean that it only gets to 100 degrees by mid-afternoon as opposed to 117 degrees. While that may not seem like a big difference, it really is.

The pace of the mission continues to remain very fast, with not much time to catch one's breath. 1LT Wes Hunt hit the ground running, completing his RL Progression and jumping straight into flying missions. He is definitely making up for lost time and with the amount of flight time he has been getting. I think he finally can understand why so many pilots have to fly with extra seat cushions! With such busy days everyone has to find a way to let off some steam. For some, like 1LT Hunt, the gym is his place of refuge. For others, the Viper Lounge continues to be quite the hot spot. When the pilots were flying days you could expect from 7pm to 11pm that the lounge would be crowded people and filled with cigar smoke as the Vipers discuss the day's events and daydream about what they



SGT Fogarty instructs SPC Bennet on loading the new COMSEC

are going to do once they get home. When the pilots shifted to the night shift, the true "lounge lizards" can still be seen out there by 5am smoking a cigar and watching the sun rise before breakfast. Another way the Vipers have found to blow off steam (and take some pent-up aggression out) is to play dodge ball. The company goes over to the battalion gym and teams are picked. SPC Zach Peters got to feel the pain of being the only guy left on one team, and CW4 Troy Snook hung with the young guys, even going so far as bleeding for his team! All in all it was a good time and no one was hurt, at least not too badly!

Congratulations go to PFC Ross Montano for being promoted to Specialist this month. He has been a tremendous asset to the company since he came to us from D Company and the promotion was well deserved. In addition, a special congratulations

goes to CW3 Troy Snook for being promoted to Chief Warrant Officer Four. We told him that he is going to have to start acting his age now that he is a field grade officer!

Well that's about all the news from our side of the world for this month. All of the Vipers continue to stay focused on the mission, but the light at the end of the tunnel is never far from our thoughts. We all look forward to that day when we are back home with all of you. Until then thank you for your continued prayers and support! Until next time.....

CPT Timothy Measner
Viper 6

Bravo Company "Reapers"



REAPERS

One of the best parts of being a company commander is the ability to write our families and tell them about all the amazing things their Soldiers are doing. I do not often waste an opportunity to brag about the Reapers' success. However, with only one month or so until we return home, I want to take time out and talk about something very important: Redeployment Safety.

In 1992, US Army Soldiers returned from the Persian Gulf War. They were heroes who had survived intense combat operations. They had won the war quickly and with few casualties. However, when they returned home, there was a tragic turn of events. The redeployment and reintegration process proved to be more dangerous than combat. Soldiers started dying at an alarming rate. Not from enemy fire or combat operations, but from motorcycle accidents, drinking and driving, and falling asleep "at the wheel." When it was all said and done, three times as many Soldiers died from traffic accidents in the first few months home as had died in the Middle East.

Fifteen years later, the first months home from deployment still claim a large number of Soldiers. The

Division we replaced in Baghdad, 3rd Infantry Division, had 10 Soldiers die from off-duty accidents during their first six months home. Four Soldiers died in motorcycle accidents, and five died in car accidents. When you read the accident reports, they read like a broken record: Soldiers out at night, driving home tired, driving (or riding) too fast for the conditions, and alcohol is usually involved.

My first weekend in 4ID, I was assigned Casualty Notification Officer duty. I was told that since 1st CAV had just completed combat operations, it would be unlikely that I would be needed. On my first night, I got a call at 2am. A staff sergeant in 1st CAV had gotten in an argument with his wife and decided to blow off steam by going drinking with his buddy. At 1am he was driving twenty miles over the speed limit enroute home when he lost control and his car flipped off the road, killing him. My job was to inform his wife that her husband was not coming home. He survived a year in combat, but not 48 hours in Texas. I saw the look in her eyes: her world crushed, the father to her children gone.

It would crush me to lose a Reaper for any reason, but especially to a careless accident. However, as a realist, I know I can only do so much. After redeployment, leadership will no longer be around 100% of the time. Soldiers will be looking to release and celebrate their accomplishments. They will have money to burn on fast cars and high-powered motorcycles. Some of our Soldiers have already purchased these "toys" in anticipation of going home. They have



CPT Caine and CW4 Jones clean up the office

been listening to their leaders for a year straight, and will be looking to take advantage of their space and freedom. These factors make a recipe for disaster.

It takes a combination of control measures to prevent these accidents from happening. One of the most important is you: their family and friends, the people they love. What you say will have a big impact on their actions. You are around them when we are not. Please, talk to your Soldiers and remind them of the risks. Make them think twice about driving late, make them think twice about driving tired. Take the keys and do not allow them to drink and drive, and remind them of the dangers of motorcycles. As leaders, we will do our part, but we need your help. Show your Soldier tough love when necessary, and keep them safe through this dangerous time.

The end is near and we will be home before you know it. Thanks for your continuous support. We could not do what we do without you.

See you soon!

CPT "Andy" Caine
REAPERS 6



CW2 Marceaux is the new Pilot-in-Command for the Reapers

Charlie Company "Sidewinders"



As we move through September, the Sidewinders are increasingly busy with preparations for returning home and continuing with our mission. Whether it be packing personal belongings or getting the Company's equipment ready to depart, everyone is busier than ever and sprinting for the finish line. The Soldiers continue to lead the battalion with excellent maintenance and we continue to make our flight mission on time, all the time.

Over the last month, we bid farewell to SSG Ross and SGT Dorman as they transitioned to the D Company Dawgs and welcomed new members to the Sidewinder family, SSG Bryan Oser and SGT Richard Wongsing. We are saddened to see SSG Ross and SGT Dorman depart. However, both of the new Sidewinders are doing outstanding jobs and we are fortunate to have them on our team. We look forward to working with them for a long time to come and send our best wishes with SSG Ross and SGT Dorman.

September brought about a few changes around the FOB. Temperatures dropped from highs of 115 degrees in the day and 90 degrees at night to ONLY 105 degrees in the day and 80 degrees at night. But, we



CPL Jernigan, CPL Keith and SFC Sanchez relax in front of their Pods

enjoy the small pleasures over here. Also, more 1st Cavalry patches are visible as more units make their way over. Both of these events are helping us continue to stay motivated and doing the jobs that allow the Company to finish our mission and return safely. Our last Soldier on R & R is returning, so the Sidewinders will be at full strength as we continue to execute our mission. Lastly, but definitely not least, we made Specialist Jernigan a Corporal. We know that Jernigan is up to the added responsibility of being an NCO and we look forward to watching him perform his new duties with pride and vigor.

The Sidewinders continue to march along performing our mission well above the standard and doing it the right way. We look forward to the challenges ahead that face us on the rest of this deployment. We think about all of you at home often and continue to work hard to return safely to you.

With my best regards
CPT Rodric G. Pauletto,
Sidewinder 06



SPC Tallet, SGT Wongsing, SPC Platt, and CPL Jernigan relax in the A/C after working hard outside

Delta Company "Dawgs"



Dearest Family and Friends,

The site of containers being packed and inspected is a great feeling. As redeployment approaches, we continue to accomplish all of the important tasks that make this period very exciting, yet very busy at the same time. Your Dawgs are continuing to excel while meeting the mission as they have for the past ten months. At the same time, we are in the initial stages of preparing for our movement back to Fort Hood and our much anticipated reunion with all of you. Part of our preparation for redeployment will include classes on reuniting with family, safety, finances and other important topics that historically plague Soldiers upon returning from long deployments. I encourage spouses and family members to take the time to utilize resources provided by the FRG and on-post agencies to focus on the same topics. Preparation now will help all of us reunite after a long and stressful year apart.



SPC Haley, SPC Johnson, and SPC Boughner

not only enjoyed a good workout, but had a good time in the process. Congratulations go to SGT Osburn who finished eighth overall in a talented field of runners. Great job!

We are excited about our impending return to Central Texas and our reunion with loved ones. At the same time, we are doing our best to stay focused and stay safe during these last two critical months. The mission continues and the 1SG and I work daily to ensure that the Dawgs remain focused and ready so they can return safely. I invite you to utilize the FRG for all of your redeployment concerns or questions during the remainder of the deployment. They are a great source of information and will assist in any way they possibly can. If interested, contact joreed.james@us.army.mil. I thank you for your untiring support of this chain of command and all of your great Soldiers. They are heroes and I am honored to work with them. Take care and stay safe.

All the best,

CPT Corey M. James
DAWG 06

This month we said goodbye to one of our finest NCOs. SSG Oser left the maintenance platoon to assume platoon sergeant duties and share his leadership with the Soldiers of Charlie Company. His absence is felt in the hangar, as he was and remains an excellent leader and outstanding maintenance supervisor. All the best goes to SSG Oser and his wonderful wife Kathy, who has been a great help with the FRG. Thanks! SGT Wongsing, another one of our superstars down in maintenance, left the company to begin work in Charlie Company. We appreciate all of your positive contributions in the maintenance platoon and wish you the best in the future.

Because of the operational tempo here at Taji, September 11th had the potential to become just another day. Instead, the mayor cell hosted a September 11th Memorial 5K run that not only provided a chance to honor our fellow Americans, but reminded us of our vital mission here to fight terrorism. There were a large number of Dawgs who attended and I am certain that they



SPC Betances, SPC Jones and SGT Scholl using the forklift to begin the load out process

Echo Company "Rough Riders"



Greetings from Roughrider 6,

As many of you know I am still in command and will remain here until our return and will undergo a quick change of command at the first of January. Well once again the Roughriders represented well in the last Camp Taji one pitch softball tournament by bring home the gold. Roughriders that were on the team and in this picture are SGT Mayle, SPC Ricciardo, CW2 Horton, CPT Ritch, SGT Jones, 1SG Arnett, and SPC Casanada.

On September 11 this year the "Roughriders" showed great loyalty to their duty and country by participating in the Camp Taji MWR 5K Run remembering those who have fallen from the World Trade Center and the Twin Towers terrorism attacks.

PROMOTIONS THIS MONTH

SPC Cho, Michael – Maintenance Platoon

SPC Gilmore, Dewayne – Distribution Platoon

PV2 Cerny, Mark – Maintenance Platoon

SEPTEMBER 2006 SOLDIER OF THE MONTH BOARD

SPC Ricciardo, Angelo - Distribution Platoon

SPC Ricciardo will be attending the battalion Soldier of the Month Board with intentions and aspirations to become a great leader. His platoon will be well represented. He has excelled in many different aspects during his assignment to this company. He has become a great role model for many Soldiers within his platoon as well as the company. Just recently he has received great accolades for preventing a serious incident from occurring.



CW2 Horton testing the sturdiness of his newly constructed Motor Pool gate.

SOLDIER OF THE QUARTER ATTENDEE

PFC Tieuel, Kavonne – Headquarters Platoon

PFC Tieuel is on her way to bigger and better things. She was the battalion's Soldier of the Month for July 2006 and qualified to attend the battalion's Soldier of the Quarter because of this accomplishment. PFC Tieuel has her mind set on her goals for the military and will continue to pursue them. Her professionalism is evident as she continues to take initiative to step up and act as an NCO in the absence of one. Her willingness to assist Soldiers has been noticed throughout the company.

Good Luck SPC Ricciardo and PFC Tieuel!!!

The maintenance platoon is taking care of business as usual. The past month and a half has been full of note worthy accomplishments and excitement. In August, CW2 Horton's long awaited front gate for the motor pool was completed and installed. Our great country gained another citizen when SPC Martinez made her way to Balad to be sworn in as a U.S. citizen. This month started out with the first containers for the platoon being customs inspected and sealed for their return to Fort Hood. The 0300 work call and attention to detail of our load master SGT(P) Arevalo, the cinabons provided by SPC Wildes and SPC Gaide, and the Soldiers made our first inspection a success. Our company has set a high standard for the battalion's future inspections. The "Pumping Ain't Easy" team issued over 117,000 gallons of JP-8 this past month. The current total is over 2 million gallons of fuel.



SFC Taylor and SSG Sandoval re-pack their duffel bags and tuff boxes after being inspected by the Customs Inspectors of 2-4 GSAB. This is just one of several steps needed to prepare for re-deployment.

“Rough Riders” (cont’d)



SGT Williams posing the newest creation made by SSG Cox. SGT Williams received this gift as a token of appreciation for her unending support for the Soldiers in E Co.

While the fuelers continue to pump, the 89B's maintain a high OPTEMPO as well. The “Ammo Dawgs” have issued over 5,000 rounds of 30mm, over 8,000 flares, and over 100 2.75 rockets this past month. As we prepare to return to our homes, the Platoon has been focusing on packing up. I think we can all agree that we are ready for our equipment to be shipped out and get on there way back to Fort Hood.

On Sept 11, SPC Ricciardo and his battle buddy, SPC Hannaman, were on a refuel mission on the flight line. They were faced with a vehicle fire while refueling one of the battalion's aircraft. The M978 Fuel Tanker they were operating out of caught on fire. They both reacted smartly and quickly and were able to put the fire out before it got worse. Their actions not only saved their lives but also the lives of other Soldiers in the area. The good news is that no one was injured, the aircraft did not sustain any damages, and the Fuel Tanker was repaired in less than 24 hours. Great job to these two Soldiers for doing the right thing. For their actions the will received an Army Achievement Medal and a battalion coin from the Battalion Commander.

Anxiety, excitement, and reunion are just a few of the many words we can use to describe our feelings during this time of the year.

CPT James R. Ritch
Roughrider 6



The Echo Company sponsored HAVENOTS

HHC "Stallions"



Stallion Family and Friends,

Okay, we will try this one more time. I am pretty certain that this will be my last newsletter with the unit. The temperatures have barely been over 110 degrees lately and it feels like a brisk eighty degrees to some of us. The lower temperature allows the 1SG and me to run a little later in the morning. Which is a plus when it comes to a few more moments of uninterrupted sleep. Nothing like a little Iraqi smog in the morning to get you going.

HHC added another Soldier to the list of the promotable. SPC Calahan McAlister is a 15P (Flight Ops Specialist) from San Jose, California. He has a twin brother and a younger sister back home. He has been in the military for three years, since enlisting in the Army back in July 2003. SPC McAlister completed Basic Training and AIT in December 2003 and was stationed in Illesheim, Germany where he served in the 11th AVN REGT S3 Shop. After aiding in the deactivation of the unit he was later assigned to 6-6 CAV as the battalion commander's driver. In December 2005, he PCS'd from Germany and was assigned to Fort Hood, Texas.

He arrived to the unit here in Iraq back in March 2006 and has been a top notch performer in the 1-4 AVN TOC. SPC(P) McAlister appeared before the NCO promotion board this month and was recommended for promotion to the rank of SGT. A week later he became the 1-4 Aviation Soldier of The Month following his appearance before the board. Congratulations to SPC (P) McAlister and all of his supporters back home. Keep up the good work.

As you already know Mr. Farrow was promoted to CW5 on 1 September. On the first of the month we promoted a few junior enlisted Soldiers as well. PV2 Griffin was promoted to Private First Class. PFC Griffin has been a welcome addition to the S6 shop, coming from Echo Company a few months ago. He is originally from Portsmouth, Virginia and graduated Basic Training at Fort Benning, Georgia in 2003. PFC Griffin also graduated from Advanced Individual Training at Fort Gordon, Georgia and was assigned to 1-4 Aviation in September 2005 as a 94E (Radio COMSEC Repairer). He originally joined the military for the educational benefits as many of us have in the past. He will major in Business and Marketing when he exits the military next year. His ultimate plan is to own a barber-shop in Killeen, Texas. Additionally his interest in music has lead him to record a CD entitled UHC



MAJ Needum addresses HHC during the promotion ceremony

which will be available in February 2007. Congratulations PFC Griffin.

We also celebrated two lateral promotions to the rank of Corporal. SPC Jose Ceja is a 92Y Supply Specialist from San Fernando, California that has truly earned his money during this deployment. CPL Ceja graduated from Basic Training on September 11, 2003 and Advanced Individual Training in November 2003. Upon completion of his training he was assigned to 1-4 Aviation and deployed to Tikrit in January 2004 where I first met the young Private Ceja. CPL Ceja started this deployment off as the gunner on my vehicle during the initial ground assault convoy into Iraq from Kuwait. This is where he earned the nickname "SPC Test Fire". You see, CPL Ceja wanted to test fire his .50 caliber machine gun during every halt of the convoy. He has worked at least two levels above his current rank and will serve the Army in fine fashion in the years to come. Since our arrival to Camp Taji, he has been the HHC Supply Sergeant and has performed masterfully. CPL Ceja will re-enlist in the near future and provide great leadership for his supply section. Upon redeployment CPL Ceja plans



HHC packs up their MILVAN in preparation to go home

"Stallions" (cont'd)



SSG Harrison and MAJ Needum pin on Corporal stripes onto CPL Fields

before he retires from the military. With 14 years of service to go before retirement, he has plenty of time to accomplish all his goals. CPL Fields has two sons Jordan and Carmonty. Congratulations and good luck CPL Fields.

Nothing in life is free. Sacrifices are always being made by the men and women in the military. Those affiliated with the military in any way shape or form know this fact all too well. We are usually deployed during the holidays and spend great deals of time away from family and friends during "training" back in the states. For these same reasons some of our Soldiers will be departing the military. Of course we still have the close bonds that we have formed within the unit and in some cases are as close as family. I ask that during this upcoming holiday season that we pay extra attention to our families, especially the children. Once again, Thank You All for the support during this deployment.

Stallion Birthdays

on completing the requirements for his Associates Degree. Ultimately, he plans on becoming a police officer with the L.A.P.D eventually moving on to work with the Narcotics Division. CPL Ceja is married to PFC Ceja and has a two and a half year old daughter named Lizette. Good job "CPL Test Fire". THIS JUST IN: CPL Ceja will be promoted to the rank of Sergeant 1 October. Now he will be known as "SGT Test Fire".

SPC Dawson
SPC Dixon
SSG Bruce
SPC Baksin
CPL Ceja

Always laugh when you can. It is cheap medicine.
Lord Byron

STALLIONS ATTACK!!
MAJ Byron C. Needum
Stallion 06
OUT

CPL Carlos Fields was the other lateral appointment for the Stallions this month. CPL Fields is from Savannah, Georgia and has been in the military for six years. He was originally a 14S Avenger Crewmember, and served at two prior duty stations. He was stationed in Ansbach, Germany and Ft. Polk, Louisiana. CPL Fields is a veteran of OIF I and served as a saw gunner on his units QRF team. Upon returning from OIF I, he re-enlisted and reclassified his MOS to become a 15P Flight Operations Specialist. Since his arrival to the unit he has served as a Flight Operations Clerk and the Battalion CSM's driver. He currently works in the TOC as the day shift Battle NCO/RTO. CPL Fields plans on being promoted to the rank of Sergeant in the near future. His ultimate goal is to obtain the rank of Command Sergeant Major



Its always a good morning when you are packing up to leave Iraq

Dragon Photo Corner



PFC Tieuel and PFC Lichtenstein taking time out of their very busy schedule to strike a pose.



Chaplin (CPT) Hernandez gives service to SPC Sanders and SPC Butler



MAJ Needum is inspecting his missile



Armament loads up some rockets onto the AH-64D



CPT Salvo prepares for his next mission



CPL Ceja after being pinned Corporal

Dragon Photo Corner



Top Hampton's "Love Van"



SGT Rivera and MAJ Needum pin on Corporal stripes on CPL Ceja



PFC Monroe conducting PMCS on the LMTV



SGT Welch is so sad about leaving Camp Taji



MAJ Needum address HHC



SGT Lizama is glad to be done packing the MILVAN

Dragon Photo Corner



LT Marion waves to the camera



Safety first at Camp Taji



SPC Henning is a key player in the sweeping the flight line



SPC Young is flushing the engine



Yes it gets hot over here.



SGT Rodriguez is serious about his work.

Dragon Photo Corner



PFC Gillis and Burt posing on the flight line.



SSG Miller inspecting an aircraft in the hangar and showing us that yes, he works out!



PFC Driskill working hard on the flight line.



SSG Lockert is shocked to find himself in the motor pool



SGT Schmitz...looks like he is posing for a GQ magazine.



1SG Belle inspecting the renovations of Lake Marker near the hangar.

Dragon Photo Corner



PFC Restad taking a well deserved break from work in the hangar



Chaplain (CPT) Rendon host a special night time pray service



SGT Hernandez on the move to inspect another aircraft on the flight line.



SGT Parker working in the motor pool



PFC Smith is happy about something...real happy.



SPC Truffa retrieving a tool from the tool room

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

A tribute to the 1-4 ARB Band



From left to right SPC Zintgraff, SGT Diemert, PFC Thompson, SPC Gosvener, and SGT Eubanks

If the rumors are correct, then a few parents, spouses, even Pastors may be wondering if their soldiers are attending services downrange. I guess the answer depends on who your soldier is. However, I must say that my personal highlight of this deployment is the fact that the 1-4ARB has its own Sunday worship service. Every Sunday underneath the stars of the Middle East, about 1 mile away from the renowned Tigris River, in a small base camp called Taji, Iraq, a number of 1-4ARB soldiers gather every Sunday. Our chapel is a little rustic gazebo with a bed sheet tacked to one of the sides serving as a screen for the projector illuminating the song lyrics. Power converters, cables, speakers, guitars, and microphones burst into action as the band strikes up a tune. The band, composed of two electric guitars, one acoustic, one bass, and two singers readily lift up praises to God well into the Iraqi night.

Truly, the Sunday Devotional is a notable highlight of my deployment experience, and I am not alone... speaking with other members who regularly at-

tended the service, this devotional experience extended well beyond the gazebo into our daily lives, sustaining and renewing our spirit every week. For some soldiers, especially the band members, the services and rehearsals were instrumental in maintaining a positive outlook during the deployment, giving the soldiers a constructive stress release in addition to a spiritual edification. For others, the likelihood of attending a service otherwise would've been non-existent due to the demanding work schedule. Over the span of the devotionals existence the comprehensive attendance of the devotional was nearly 400 soldiers. This is an awesome feat, considering that the 1-4ARB is only one of two battalions on this camp, with its own regularly scheduled service, and still this is the only outdoor service.

My purpose in mentioning this service is for twofold reasons. First, I would like to take this opportunity publicly express my personal gratitude to each of the band members who continually commit their talents for the work of God. SGT Eubanks of Delta Company on guitar, SGT Diemert of (D Co) on guitar, SPC Zintgraff (D Co) on acoustic guitar, SPC Boughner (D Co) on Bass, SPC Gosvener (B Co) and PFC Thompson (HHC) on vocals. Each of these individuals commits relentless energy and time for each of the Devotionals, the CAB June Prayer Luncheon sponsored by 1-4ARB, and a coffee Christian concert hosted by 1BCT. These soldiers are among the most musically gifted soldiers I've ever seen. A few of the musicians made additional musical contributions by supporting three memorial ceremonies in honor of our fallen brothers in arms. The musicians as a whole remain an inspiration to me personally and I am exceedingly grateful for having the privilege of being their Pastor this year.

The second reason for mentioning this service and those who contributed stems from the concern of many back home for the soldier's ability to sustain spiritual vitality during a deployment. The scriptures tell us that God "turns the desert into pools of water and the parched ground into flowing springs." (Psalms 107:35) God has certainly provided a watering for our souls in the midst of this parched land for all who have a thirst for their souls. Iraq is definitely a scorched land, physically and spiritually but God continues to refresh our souls with His presence every week. During a special portion of our service, we lift up prayers to God on behalf of each of your needs. Any family member known to be ill, distressed, or has other special needs, is lifted up in prayer to God. Through these prayers, we are confident that He remains ever present with us in Iraq as He is present with you in the United States. May God's presence continue to be with you and your family throughout this deployment.

Blessings

Chaplain (CPT) Regino R. Hernandez, III
1-4ARB Battalion Chaplain